



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service
 1222 Woodward Street
 Orlando, Florida 32803
 407 / 648-6013

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>



WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending April 17, 2005

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Dry conditions over most of the Peninsula during the week of April 11 through 17 decreased soil moisture supplies, allowed field work to stay on schedule and increased the danger of wild fires. Many Peninsula and some eastern Panhandle localities received no rain; other areas in the far western Panhandle received around four inches. Some central and northern localities received about an inch of rain for the week. Temperatures in the major cities averaged normal to six degrees below. Daytime highs averaged in the 70s and 80s while nighttime lows averaged mostly in the 50s and 60s. The lows in Tallahassee averaged in the 40s with at least one low in the 30s reported.

FIELD CROPS: Wet fields in Gadsden County delayed some corn planting. Soils dried enough in northern parts of Washington County for field preparation and planting to resume, but southern areas along Homes Creek remain too wet for any field activities. Lafayette County reported some flooding. In Madison County, very cool nights and recent excessive rains delayed some planting of row crops and the spreading of lime and fertilizer. Recent cool temperatures in Wakulla County slowed the growth of row crops with windy weather quickly drying out topsoil. Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies for most of the Panhandle are adequate to surplus with Leon County reporting some areas with short supplies. Most soil moisture supplies over the Peninsula are short to adequate with Hardee and Okeechobee counties reporting surplus supplies. In Dade County, soils are reportedly very dry with moisture supplies rated very short to short. Broward County also reported very short to short soil moisture.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	1	1	6	1	0	10
Short	19	9	44	13	2	41
Adequate	50	60	49	60	78	48
Surplus	30	30	1	26	20	1

VEGETABLES: The dry conditions kept harvesting on schedule with most southern Peninsula planting completed for the season. The lack of rain in most areas prompted producers to irrigate as needed. Watermelon picking is underway in southern Peninsula localities with a very light amount available. Strawberry harvesting is nearly done for the year. Other vegetables and non citrus fruit harvested during the week include snap beans, blueberries, cabbage, celery, cucumbers, peppers, potatoes, radishes, squash, sweet corn and tomatoes. Lighter amounts of eggplant, endive, escarole and lettuce were also available.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, the condition of pasture is poor to excellent with most in good condition. Grass and small grain forage growth were slowed by cooler weather. In the northern areas, some low-lying areas are very wet. Very cool nights and excess rains put a crimp on pasture and hayfield quality. In the central areas, most pasture is in fair to good condition. In southwest areas, range condition is poor to excellent while cattle condition is poor to good. The condition of range decreased due to dry weather. Another week with no rain will affect forage production. Statewide, the condition of cattle is mostly good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	5	5	10	0
Fair	25	25	30	20
Good	65	60	60	75
Excellent	5	10	0	5

CITRUS: Warm weather prevailed for most of the week in citrus producing areas with temperatures cooling towards the end of the week. Traces of rain were recorded throughout the State. There are still some small pockets of bloom in some areas; however, bloom and petal drop is relatively complete throughout the State with field workers reporting small pea size fruit on oranges and grapefruit. New growth is showing where growers lost leaves due to the hurricanes, and began with fertilization shortly thereafter. Cultural practices are continuing including fertilizations, herbiciding and applications of insecticides. Early and mid orange harvesting is over, with all open processing plants transitioning to the harvest of late oranges (Valencias). White and colored grapefruit harvesting, being picked for both fresh and processing, is decreasing. Tangelo harvesting is complete and Temple harvesting is winding down. Honey tangerine harvest is slowing, but fruit are still being picked, primarily for the fresh market.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED WEEK ENDED

Crop	Apr 03	Apr 10	Apr 17
	<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>		
Early & Mid oranges	47	4	1
Late oranges	5,368	5,297	5,958
Grapefruit	414	394	334
Honey tangerines	100	99	76
Temples	10	4	1

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In cooperation with the Florida Cooperative Extension Service whose county directors participate in supplying field information.